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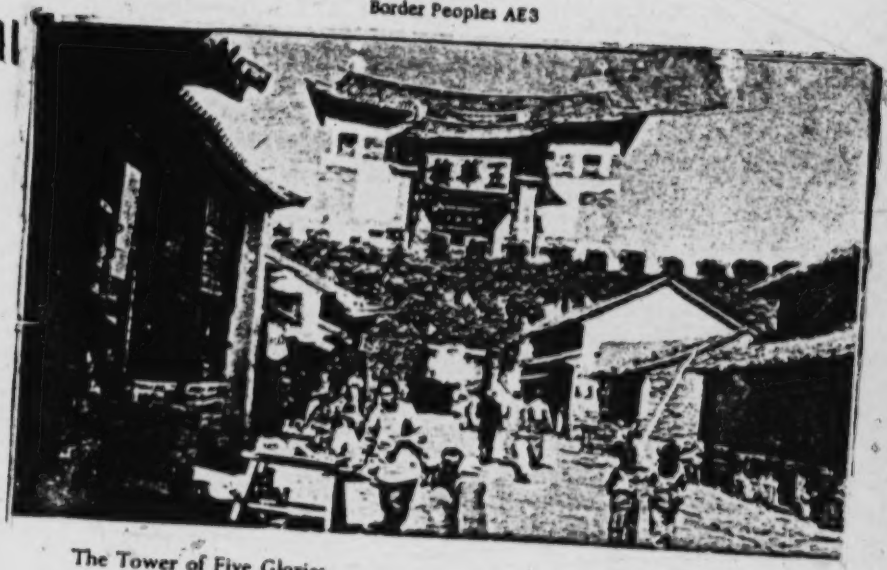
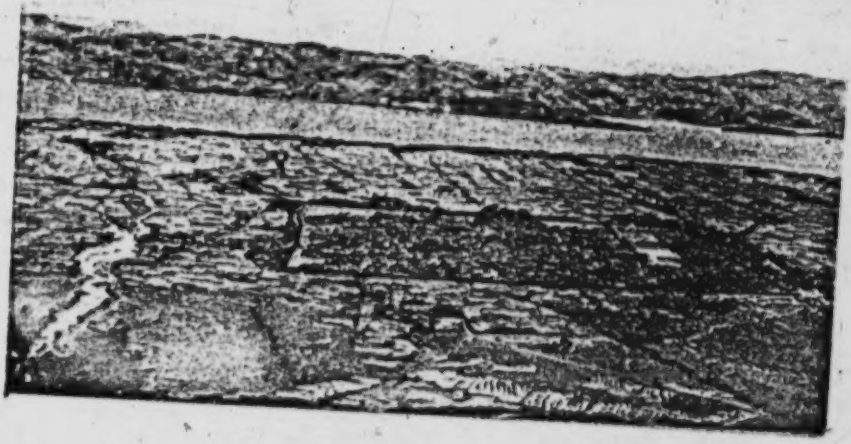


The Tower of Five Glories

Ta Li city and Erh Hai lake.



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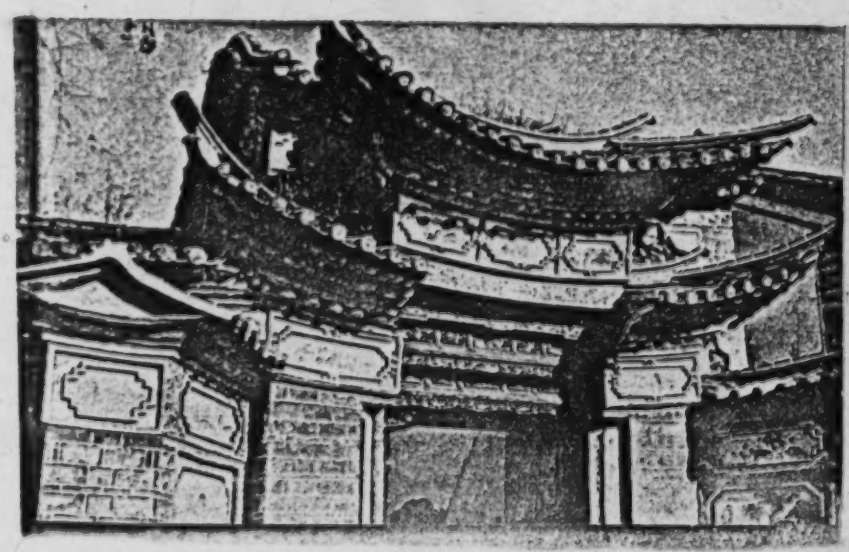
Ta Li house. Decoration shows Moslem influence.

Gateway of wealthy house in Ta Li.



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669 perished. The extensive ruins of their houses, now covered
731 with cactus and wild shrubs, still encumber large parts of the walled enclosure. These older ruins are for the most part in the south east part of the city, those due to the great earthquake of 1925 are found in all parts. This second disaster caused great destruction and a heavy loss of life. The main street was burnt out, and thus the merchant community suffered a total loss of their goods, which were not of course covered by any form of insurance. The loss of life was not so heavy as in the country, where along the lake shore hundreds died in the sudden collapse of their homes. Most of the dwellings in the city were however, either ruined, or so badly damaged as to be uninhabitable. More solidly built, or as the faithful believe, protected by the gods, the great pagodas outside the city and the main temples inside the walls, withstood the shock, as did three out of the four Gate Towers.

As there is no form of insurance operating in Yunnan these heavy losses fell wholly upon the householders themselves. For years the city lay almost in ruins. Slowly, as wealth accumulated, men began to rebuild, first their shops, then the homes of the richer classes, and still to-day the work of reconstruction goes on. During the years 1937 and 1938
341 more than thirty ruinous houses were rebuilt. Fortunately Ta Li was then still far from the centres of progress and innovation, so the old style of architecture was employed in rebuilding the city, unchanged by the rather unhappy influence of European ideas found in too many of the new buildings in the greater cities of China. Ta Li to-day, no longer a city of ruins, is one of the most attractive examples of a small Chinese city built entirely in Chinese style. The end and back walls of the better class houses are made of the local granite building stone, the front, where the windows and doors are placed, of wood, and the roofs are tiled. The three solid walls are plastered and whitewashed on the out-

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341 side, the blank surfaces at the gable ends and under the eaves being decorated with black and white arabesques. The doors in the wooden fronts are carved, and the window spaces closed with lattices of intricate and unusual designs. The houses, as in all parts of China, are built on the courtyard plan, but are usually two storied.

This style of architecture is not of course peculiar to Ta Li, and there is no difference between the houses inhabited by Min Chia and by Chinese. If there was ever an indigenous type of house unlike the Chinese kind, it has entirely disappeared. On the other hand, the custom of decorating the end walls with black and white arabesque patterns is peculiar to the Ta Li region and is not found in other parts of Yunnan. The small pointed windows let into the end and back walls, another peculiarity of Ta Li houses, are not found in ordinary Chinese designed houses and these, and the decoration found in conjunction with them, may perhaps be attributed to Moslem influence.

351 247 Every residential house has a garden as well as the central courtyard. The garden, part of which is used for vegetables, is usually shaded with fine trees and gay with flowering shrubs. The camelia or tea tree, of which there are many varieties, is very popular at Ta Li in the winter months. In summer, roses, azaleas and rhododendrons (the latter with difficulty acclimatised to the lower altitude), give a constant succession of flowers, and the plants are trained with loving care into strange shapes representing Chinese characters for happiness and good luck. The people of Ta Li are keen amateur gardeners and in recent years many foreign flowers such as zinnias and marigolds have been introduced. Loquats, oranges and pears are grown, although the quality of fruit from the eastern shore of the lake is much superior. These trees are grown in Ta Li more for their blossom than for the fruit.

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Kuan Yin island in Erh Hai lake.

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Musician at the Gwer
Sa La festival.

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177 the month is long or short and on which days the 24 chieh-ch'i occur,
805 that is, the dates according to which the weather predictions are
796 made. The Fantzu do not celebrate any Chinese calendar day except New Year. Not everybody knows when his birthday is or how old he is. They celebrate only the birthday of a Living Buddha, which coincides with the date of death of his previous incarnation.

532 The lay Mewu-Fantzu carry on art of any kind as little as they
341 do education. The arts of architecture, painting and sculpture are
792 practiced exclusively by the lamas. Only laymen who were once lamas may possibly engage in an art, for example, painting.

306 Although the tent nomads are very fond of ornaments, all their jewelry, except what comes from Inner Tibet, is made by Chinese and Mohammedans, albeit in strict Tibetan style. Nor do the women engage in any kind of artistic handwork, as for example embroidery.

533 It is different with music. The nomads cultivate simple folk music as well as religious music. Their only musical instrument is the flute, which is made of brass or of the wing bones of the vulture. Both men and women play the flute. They play mostly in spring, in the second and third months, in their tents, out on the pasture and along the road. Special occasions for music-making are New Year and family festivals, where there is much drinking and courtship. They enjoy singing, and do a great deal of it, particularly the young men and girls, without instrumental accompaniment. They have drinking songs, shepherd songs, love songs sung on the mountains, and a New Year's song. Once I also heard a monotonous work song sung by women who were washing fleece. Most of the songs are sung in alternating parts for boys and girls. The melodies are reminiscent of melancholy /40/ Russian folk tunes, sometimes also Alpine yodels. I succeeded in noting down the following songs which were sung in the mountains in alternating parts between boys and girls:

I.
1. Do not go away.
2. When you return I'll tell you something nice.

II.
1. When you look up, you see mountains, and beyond the mountains there is a river.
2. Even though corals and pearls look like stones, they are as dear as gold and silver.
3. Even though my friend is Chinese, he is of royal blood.